



AWARENESS IS COMING

BY KATHLEEN PICHÉ, L.C.S.W., PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and this year the LACDMH Public Information Office has many powerful tools for everyone to utilize in encouraging prevention, education and awareness related to mental health issues. First, we have produced three new segments of the Emmy Award-winning television series *Profiles of Hope*. Second, we have created nine new segments of the monthly *Meeting of the Minds* video news-magazine, to debut each month throughout the year on the LA County Channel and on the LACDMH website and YouTube site (<http://www.youtube.com/user/lacdmhpio>). Lastly, we are launching a mental health awareness campaign associated with a lime green ribbon and bracelet, featuring L.A. Laker Metta World Peace as our spokesperson.

The new *Profiles of Hope* series highlights the stories of singer/actor Rick Springfield, actress/model/writer Mariel Hemingway and award-winning film/television director Paris Barclay. All profiles speak honestly on various public and private issues relating to themselves and their families on their road to hope, wellness and recovery, including barriers related to psychosis, depression, suicidal ideation, addiction, same-sex marriage and foster child adoption. The series will be broadcast on KLCS-TV and on the County Channel in May 2013, and will be available online and through the Public Information Office.

The ten-minute episodes of *Meeting of the Minds* will again feature three segments: *Mental Health Minute*, hosted by Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, LACDMH Public Information Officer II, informing us on current issues related to mental health in general; *Message from the Director*, featuring Marvin Southard, D.S.W, LACDMH Director, who speaks about current news related to the department; and *Walk the Talk*, interviews I have conducted with current and former clients who have overcome almost every setback and hardship imaginable, including homelessness, trauma, depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, substance use and personality disorders. The interviews are meant to inspire others in the community to openly discuss their problems and seek help if necessary. Studies show that early intervention improves outcomes.

The lime green ribbon campaign will be promoted with actual ribbons and bracelets to be distributed throughout the community to promote a constant visual awareness of mental health issues. Metta World Peace will continue advocating for children's mental health by speaking to local L.A. schools and traveling to Washington, D.C. to promote Congresswoman Grace Napolitano's Mental Health in Schools Act (<http://napolitano.house.gov/press-release/rep-napolitano-metta-world-peace-promote-mental-health>). World Peace already has a website dedicated to the lime green ribbon: <http://www.limelightmentalhealth.com/>.